

Juan José Unzilla is an engineer and he works in telecommunications, he is teacher at University of Basque Country. He also works in cybersecurity and software nets.

- When you were young, did you want to be a scientist?

When I was young I didn't think very much about this questions, I liked to build things but mainly, understand how the machines, engines and all kind of devices really work. In this way, I think when I was young I was more interested in engineering than in science. In my high school years, I liked physics, chemistry and maths, but as I told before, more as a tool for understanding other matters than as a topic of knowledge themselves.

It can say that I was a future engineer that liked to understand the working of things and then teaching it. And once I started to teach at the university, I realized that I needed to research to increase and improve my knowledge, and also to teach better.

- What is your favorite part of your job?

My work has two main parts, teaching and research. And as a consequence of both, the management of the bureaucracy related to them. I really like my work a lot, both parts, but maybe I enjoy a little bit more with teaching. I think it is very good to be able to work on something you like and having the possibility of deciding in which areas you develop your research.

I work in a research team, i2t (Grupo de Investigación en Ingeniería Telemática, Telematic engineering research group) and most of the people who take part of this team also share with me some subjects in the degree and in the master of telecommunications engineering. This helps me because allow us the discussion of different topics, for example, about how we can improve our classes or how we can go further in our research projects.

- How many hours a day do you work?

I try not to work more than 8 hours a day, but not always I achieve it. In my opinion, the key is a good planning to avoid the extra work at the last minute, but many times you have interferences from other people that impact in your work, things that aren't finished on time, or unexpected tasks you must do and things like that. In these cases, again a good planning is crucial to conclude the work in the shortest time possible.

- Is someone in your family a scientist?

Well, I am the first in my family who has a PhD, so it can say that my family has not a scientist tradition. I have several uncles that have been teachers, but now they are retired.

My sister in law has also a PhD and works with me in the i2t research group. She is a really good engineer and also a very good researcher.

- Why did you choose to become a teacher?

In some way, it was casual. I always liked teaching but while I was studying my degree in electrical engineering I never think to be a university teacher. But when I was finishing my final degree project, the School of Engineering needed new professors for telecommunication degree and I thought that it could be an opportunity to try it. At the same time, I started the PhD courses and in a few months, I realize that I liked teaching and also the research.

This happened almost 28 years ago, during all this time I have done a lot of things, I have taught many different subjects, I have worked on many research projects and also I have be involved in several management positions at the University of the Basque Country.

Looking backward, I am very happy with the choice I made then.

- What do you think about women scientists?

I think women scientists have made in the past and nowadays make an amazing work to increase the knowledge in all fields. Although their visibility and the recognized of their contributions has clearly increased in the last years, an important gender gap still continues.

There are should not differences in professional careers based on researcher's gender, we should only measure the work done and the results obtained, but this is something that, sadly, not always occurs.

I think more actions and efforts must be done in order to warrant the gender equality in all places and situations. Maybe, universities and research labs are likely a better place than others, but we have also things to change.

In my opinion, we should not expect that the organizations or the governments starting the changes, all of us can do small changes in our daily lives that will achieve gender equality faster.